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CITY OFFICIALS

NAME SWANFELDT, JOHN

PUBLIC OFFICES HELD

(DATE)

CITY:

Park Commission.....1930-1933
Vice-President.....1931-1933

COUNTY:

STATE:

FEDERAL:

CIVIC ACTIVITIES:

BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Bookkeeper
Summer resort business
Real estate
City official

PORTRAIT:

ATTACHED OR ENCLOSED IN ENVELOPE: none

PORTRAITS APPEARING ELSEWHERE (DATES)

1 or 2 in 1.

ANECDOTES AND PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS:

Tent City, the unique inspiration of Axel Swanfeldt, was built on Catalina Island on land leased from the Bannings. When the leases expired the Swanfeldts erected a huge circus tent near the old post office site at Eighth and Spring streets, and auctioned off the tents, awnings, and household goods which comprised the equipment for housing thousands of vacationists.

In the heyday of Tent City, receipts from weekends at Catalina, sometimes totaling \$15,000, were brought home to Boyle Heights by Axel Swanfeldt, and calmly left in the sleeping household with no fear of burglary.

Bachelor John Swanfeldt, "Honest John," admits to being "different and indifferent about people." He enjoys his bachelorhood and spoiling his little nieces and nephews.

He left the Swanfeldt business, which Axel Swanfeldt had incorporated, 1910, with a share for each of his three sons and one for his wife, because he wanted to be all or nothing in his own business.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

BOOKS:

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS:

Los Angeles Times

PERSONAL INTERVIEW:

INTERVIEWED BY: Luella Sawyer

DATE OF INTERVIEW: May 7, 1935

Rewritten by Clare Wallace, July 7, 1936

The Los Angeles Public Library
Local History Collection
Biography

NAME SWANFELDT, JOHN

Occupation Business man and realtor

Address 461 N. Bonnie Brae, Los Angeles

Birth (Date and Place) May 17, 1885, Galveston, Texas

FATHER Axel Wilhelm Swanfeldt

Birth (Date and Place) 1849, Sweden

If Deceased, When 1925, Los Angeles, Calif.

MOTHER Caroline Anderson

Birth (Date and Place) 1852, Sweden

If Deceased, When 1929, Los Angeles, California

IF MARRIED, TO WHOM Never married

Birth of Same (Date and Place)

If Deceased, When

When Married

CHILDREN (Married Names of Daughters)

TITLES OF BOOKS, ARTICLES, MUSIC, OR OTHER CREATIVE
WORK

(In the case of printed matter, please give date and publisher; of periodical publications also name of magazine and date.)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page or a sheet of stationery. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

REVIEWS, CRITICISMS, AND OTHER BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

(Please note printed matter concerning yourself or your work. We would appreciate any such material you may send, clippings, reviews, portrait.)

ANCESTORS OF DISTINCTION OR LOCAL INTEREST

(Please include names of local interest as "forty-niners," or any one connected with the affairs or development of the state or city, as officials, professional men, merchants, etc.)

Father, Axel Swanfeldt, following the custom of the times, was apprenticed to a sailmaker in his youth. After traveling over the world he settled in Houston, Texas, and went into business for himself. He migrated to California, 1887, with his family, and became a pioneer business man of Southern California.

EDUCATION (Schools, Colleges, Degrees, Etc.)

Grammar and High schools, Los Angeles

CLUBS, LEARNED SOCIETIES, ETC.

Mason (was youngest member of the lodge west of Chicago)

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

Progressive Republican

RESIDENCE IN CALIFORNIA SINCE

1887

SKETCH

(Please make this as full as possible, giving business affiliations, positions of honor or trust with dates if possible.)

Born May 17, 1885, in Galveston, Texas,
John Swanfeldt was brought by his parents to California in 1887.

He received his education in Los Angeles, attending the old Sand Street school, and Los Angeles High, graduating with the class of 1903. He then entered his father's awning business as a bookkeeper.

In 1897 the Swanfeldt family had erected Tent City in Avalon, on Catalina Island, and later another tent city resort in Coronado, near San Diego. Mr. Swanfeldt remained in association with his father and brothers in these awning and summer resort enterprises until 1919, when he entered real estate business for himself.

Appointed 1930, by Mayor Porter, to succeed Mr. W. C. Yeatman, on the Park Commission. Mr. Swanfeldt served until July of 1933. He was vice-president of the Commission from July 1931 to the end of his service. During his term the Greek Theatre was finished, the golf course reconstructed, and the Planetarium started. Also, several parks in San Pedro were completed during this time.

Since retirement as a public official Mr. Swanfeldt continues his real estate interests in Los Angeles.

Hobbies: Hiking alone in the mountains.